# THE RADZIWIŁŁ CHRONICLE

# Legacy in Illumination: A Vibrant Journey through the Radziwiłł Chronicle

## Historical Significance and Preservation

The Radziwiłł Chronicle, also recognized as the Königsberg Chronicle, is a historically significant artifact, comprising a series of Old East Slavic illuminated manuscripts from the 15th century. This collection is reputed to be a reproduction of an earlier 13th-century original. The chronicle's nomenclature is rooted in its association with the esteemed Radziwiłł lineage of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which later became part of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. The family safeguarded the manuscript within the confines of their Nesvizh Castle during the 17th and 18th centuries. In a notable historical movement, the manuscript was relocated from Königsberg to the Russian Academy of Sciences' Library in Saint Petersburg in 1761, where it remains preserved to this day.

## Content and Artistic Merit

The Radziwiłł Chronicle stands out as a Rus' chronicle that meticulously documents the history of Kievan Rus' and its neighboring regions, spanning from the fifth century up until the dawn of the 13th century. It is particularly renowned for its extensive collection of over 600 vibrant illustrations, which are believed to possibly echo the artistic style of the 13th-century original. These illustrations are not merely decorative but serve as a visual narrative of the events detailed within the manuscript. The chronicle is inclusive of the 'Tale of Bygone Years' and continues with annual entries until the year 1206, providing a rich pictorial history that distinguishes it among other East Slavic chronicles.

# CULTURAL AND GENEALOGICAL ROOTS

**The Radziwiłł Chronicle is more than a historical document; it is a cultural touchstone for the nations of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine, all of which regard Kievan Rus' as a foundational element of their historical identity. The chronicle's preservation and the tales it recounts are emblematic of the shared heritage that continues to influence these nations today. The Radziwiłł family's role in safeguarding the manuscript for centuries underscores the importance of noble lineages in the stewardship of cultural artifacts.**

**600+**
**number of color illustrations in the Radziwiłł Chronicle**

THE BAPTISM OF PRINCE VLADIMIR I IN KORSUN IN 988 (FROM THE RADZIWIŁŁ CHRONICLE

The Primary Chronicle is vibrant with Christian themes and biblical allusions, which are often said to reflect the text's monastic authorship. Aleksandr Koptev remarks that the Chronicle belongs to the genre of Christian literature. In the introduction, the chronicler explores the biblical origin of the Slavic people, and traces their heritage back to Noah. On numerous occasions throughout the text, the chronicler discusses the pagan Slavs in a condescending manner, saying "for they were but pagans, and therefore ignorant." Later in the Chronicle, one of the most pivotal moments of the narrative is Vladimir the Great's conversion to Orthodox Christianity, which ignited extensive Christianization of Kievan Rus'.

RAND McNALLY

The rise and fall of peoples and nations for 4,000 years.

# HISTOMAP OF WORLD HISTORY

By John B. Sparks

| B. C. | Mediterranean People | | | Alpine People | Semitic People | Alpine and Proto-Nordic People | | Mongolian People | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | AEGEANS | EGYPTIANS | | HITTITES | AMORITES | IRANIANS | INDIANS | HUNS | CHINESE |
| 1950 | Mediterranean Aegeans or sea-going Cretans of the First Middle Minoan Period | Egyptians have by this time developed agriculture, ship-building, government, commerce, art, law, writing and mathematics. Twelfth Dynasty. Second or Middle Egyptian Period Re-unification of Egypt into a strong feudal State under the Theban Kings. Amenemhet I builds Temple of Ammon at Thebes. | | Indo-European Hittites (Hatti) | Hammurabi (sixth king of dynasty) formulates code of laws, foreshadowing later standards of | Early Iranians, Elamites, Mitani, Kassites, Cossaei, etc., probably of same Aryan | (Hindus) Aryan-speaking Proto-Nordics, | The oldest historical records of | China a small empire divided into nine provinces under the autocratic rule of one emperor. |
| 1900 | have developed a culture under Egyptian influence and built monumental city at Cnossus, political and commercial capital, trading with Egypt and Babylonia | Sesostris I conquers Nubia. Egyptian culture at zenith; finest and most perfect art forms. Amenemhet II. Classical art and architecture. Dams and canals constructed and land reclaimed by | | probably of the Alpine race | conduct of Western world. Babylonian Kingdom of the Amorites. Abraham leaves Ur, city of Cnaldea, and | Proto-Nordic stock as Hindus. Kutur-Lagamar (Chedorlaomer), King of Elam. Principal cities at Susa and Anzan. | ancestors of the present Hindus, invade the Punjab, inhabited | Eastern civilisations contain | The period of the Hia or Hsia Dynasty |
| 1850 | Second Middle Minoan Period Bronzes, pottery and tiles in archaic style Hieroglyphic records on clay tablets as yet undeciphered. | Irrigation in the Fayum. Mines worked for gold, silver, copper and tin Decline in Art forms. Foreign conquests. Syria plundered. Sesostris III. Period of wealth. EGYPTIANS | | ancestors of the present Armenians, | travels to Assyria, then to Syria (Canaan) Babylonians The Amorites and other inhabitants of | These tribes probably brought the horse to Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, and had bows and arrows as chief weapons. | until now by primitive | references to continuous | Emperors Yu and Shung-Kang. Ancient records are unreliable and |
| 1800 | Cretans the leading sea-power of the Mediterranean. AEGEANS | Worship of sun-god Ra. Prosperity under Amenemhet III. Reservoir of Lake Moeris constructed at Fayum. Amenemhet IV built temple to Osiris at Abydos. | | establish Kingdom in Anatolia. | Babylonia absorb the Sumerian and Akkadian cultures of Ur, Eridhu and Nippur, including the cuneiform writing. | IRANIANS Early Elamites were makers of a finely painted pottery | Dravidians. These early Aryans | raids by MONGOLIANS Mongolian and | largely legendary. Accession of Emperor Chieh. |
| 1750 | Third Middle Minoan Period Sumptuous palaces built at Phaestos and Mallia. Bull-ring sports at Cnossus possibly gave rise to | Princess Sebeknefrue. XIIIth Dynasty, a period of internal strife and disorder, but new blood | | Adoption of Sumerian cuneiform on tablets, using an Indo-European language. | Kassite Dynasty Kassite or IIIrd Dynasty established by Iranian Kassites. | shaped on a potters' wheel. Their civilisation probably antedates that of both the Sumerians and the Egyptians. | introduced a tribal system of | Alpine tribes of Central Asia. | Development of military strength. The great drought. |
| 1700 | fable of the Minotaur. Polychrome pottery. Cnossus destroyed, possibly by earthquake. Temporary diminution | is introduced by invasion of Semitic Nomads (Bedouin) who rule Egypt under name of the Hyksos Kings | | HITTITES Worship of the Great Earth Mother. | Babylon is now the Holy City of Western Asia where Istar and Marduk are worshipped. Priests all-powerful. Astrology developed. | Remains of this ancient culture recently discovered at Susa (Elam) and Anau (Turkestan) | Government, and practiced agriculture. | Scyths, or Scythians; Huns; Tartars; | Rebellion under Tang. End of Hia Dynasty |
| 1650 | of power of the Sea-Kings. Recovery | Introduction of horses. Military resources developed under King Khian who levied heavy tribute of corn from | | History of Hittites largely unknown. Large fortified | Decline in art shown by pottery and seals. AMORITES | Untas-Gal, Elamite King, noted for building palaces. | INDIANS (Hindus) Elamite influence on | Tungusi; Yu-chi; Niu-chi, etc. | and beginning of Shang Dynasty Emperor Chang-Tang. |
| | and rapid advance of civilisation to most brilliant period | vassal states and left many monuments. Archaic period in art. | | city at Khatti, the present Boghaz | Semitic alphabet in use on clay tablets. | Elamites Elamites press into India | Indian buildings in the Punjab. | HUNS | Tai-Chia. |

**The chart is a visual representation of the rise and fall of various peoples and nations over a 4,000-year timeline, focusing on the Mediterranean, Alpine, Semitic, Proto-Nordic, and Mongolian peoples. It features color bands for each nation or ethnic group, with the width of each band proportional to the group's influence at the time. The chart includes dates of important persons and events, allowing viewers to track the progression of empires, the emergence of new cultures, and the migration of peoples. It provides a snapshot of concurrent global developments at any given moment in history.**

RAND McNALLY The rise and fall of peoples and nations for 4,000 years.

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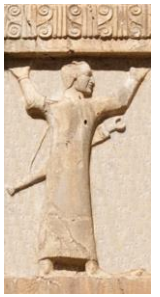

# Radziwiłł Chronicle

The Radziwiłł Chronicle, also known as the Königsberg Chronicle, is a collection of Old East Slavic illuminated manuscripts from the 15th-century; it is believed to be a copy of a 13th-century original. Its name is derived from the Radziwiłł family of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (later, the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth), who kept it in their Nesvizh Castle in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Radziwiłł manuscript was taken out of Königsberg in 1761 and acquired by the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg, where it is currently being preserved.

The work is a Rus' chronicle which tells the history of Kievan Rus' and its neighbors from the fifth to the early 13th centuries in pictorial form, representing events described in the manuscript with more than 600 colour illustrations. Among East Slavic chronicles, the Radziwiłł is distinguished for the richness and quantity of its illustrations, which may derive from the 13th-century original.[citation needed] The chronicle includes the Tale of Bygone Years and extends it with yearly entries until 1206.

877 – 945

IGOR OF KIEV

# RADZIWIŁŁ CHRONICLE

**Prince Igor Exacting Tribute from the Drevlyans, by Klavdiy Lebedev (1852–1916).**

Information about Igor comes mostly from the Primary Chronicle, which states that Igor was the son of Rurik:On his deathbed, Rurik bequeathed his realm to Oleg, who belonged to his kin, and entrusted to Oleg's hands his son Igor', for he was very young.

Rurik (also spelled Rorik, Riurik or Ryurik; Church Slavonic: Рюрикъ, romanized: Rjurikŭ; Old Norse: HrøríkR; died 879) was a Varangian chieftain of the Rus' who, according to tradition, was invited to reign in Novgorod in the year 862. The Primary Chronicle states that Rurik was succeeded by his kinsman Oleg who was regent for his infant son Igor. Traditionally, Rurik has been considered the founder of the Rurik dynasty, which was the ruling dynasty of Kievan Rus' and its principalities, and ultimately the Tsardom of Russia, until the death of Feodor I in 1598.

# PRIMARY CHRONICLE

**The Russian Primary Chronicle, commonly shortened to Primary Chronicle (Church Slavonic: Повѣсть временьныхъ лѣтъ, romanized: Pověstĭ vremęnĭnyxŭ lětŭ, commonly transcribed Povest' vremennykh let (PVL),[a] lit. 'Tale of Bygone Years'), is a chronicle of Kievan Rus' from about 850 to 1110. It is believed to have been originally compiled in or near Kiev in the 1110s. Tradition ascribed its compilation to the monk Nestor beginning in the 17th century, but this is no longer believed to have been the case.**

**The title of the work, Povest' vremennykh let ("Tale of Bygone Years") comes from the opening sentence of the Laurentian text: "These are the narratives of bygone years regarding the origin of the land of Rus', the first princes of Kiev, and from what source the land of Rus' had its beginning". The work is considered a fundamental source for the earliest history of the East Slavs.**

## SURVIVING MANUSCRIPTS

Laurentian Codex[10] (1377)
Hypatian Codex[10] (c. 1425)
Radziwiłł Chronicle[10] (c. 1500)
Academic Chronicle[10] (c. 1500)
Khlebnikov Codex[10] (c. 1575)
Trinity Chronicle[10] (c. 1450; excluded by some scholars who count only "five main witnesses"

# The Baptism of Prince Vladimir I in Korsun in 988 (from the Radziwiłł Chronicle

**The Primary Chronicle is vibrant with Christian themes and biblical allusions, which are often said to reflect the text's monastic authorship. Aleksandr Koptev remarks that the Chronicle belongs to the genre of Christian literature. In the introduction, the chronicler explores the biblical origin of the Slavic people, and traces their heritage back to Noah. On numerous occasions throughout the text, the chronicler discusses the pagan Slavs in a condescending manner, saying "for they were but pagans, and therefore ignorant." Later in the Chronicle, one of the most pivotal moments of the narrative is Vladimir the Great's conversion to Orthodox Christianity, which ignited extensive Christianization of Kievan Rus'.**

# MAJOR EVENTS

**852** (6360): The principal date mentioned in the Primary Chronicle, when the land of Rus' was first named in the Greek chronicle of George Hamartolos; this is evidence that the compiler used it as one of the sources for the Primary Chronicle.
**859:** 'The Varangians from beyond the sea imposed tribute upon the Chuds, the Slavs, the Merians, the Ves', and the Krivichians. But the Khazars imposed it upon the Polyanians, the Severians, and the Vyatichians'.
**862:** The calling of the Varangians. The various tributaries of the Varangians attempted to rid themselves of the Varangian lordship, which led to quarrels among the tribes and culminated in them inviting a knyaz ("prince") from the Varangians to rule over them. As a result, the three Varangian brothers Rurik, Sineus and Truvor and their kinsfolk crossed the sea and settled themselves in various localities, and it is claimed that it was after these Varangians that the land of Rus' would eventually be named. Around the same time, two other Varangians called Askold and Dir captured the town of Kiev.
**866** (6374): The Siege of Constantinople (860) by Rus' forces. According to Byzantine sources, this happened in 860, not 866.
**1113**: Rise to power of Vladimir Monomakh, whose religious testament and prayers were appended at the end of the Chronicle by monk Sylvester, working from St. Michael's monastery in **1116**.

# Varangian routes